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The

# HOOSIER PHILATELIST

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO PHILATELY.

F. N. MASSOTH, JR., EDITOR AND PUBLISHER,  
HANOVER CENTRE, INDIANA.

T. J. MITCHELL, ASSOCIATE EDITOR,  
348 Fulton St., CHICAGO, ILLS.

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# The Hoosier Philatelist.

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F. N. MASSOTH, JR., EDITOR AND PUBLISHER,

HANDOVER CENTRE, INDIANA.

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348 Fulton St.,

CHICAGO, ILLS.

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
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# The Hoosier Philatelist.

Vol. I.

JULY, 1889.

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## AERIAL POSTAL MESSENGERS.

BY PH. HEINSBERGER, *New York.*

The history of "homing pigeons" is as old as the "Pentateuch," for the earliest information with regard to these birds, is, the "Pigeon in Noah's Ark." Ever since then they have been used as messengers and are still so used, being serviceable where the telegraph, optical signals, and all other means of communication are unavailing. The early navigators of Egypt made use of these birds at sea, to inform their families or friends of any mishap, that may have befallen them in their perilous voyages in frail crafts, or to inform them of nearing home from distant shores. At the time of the crusades, the Egyptians used pigeons as messengers, to a great extent. The city of Cairo, (Egypt) was made a central depot for pigeons, and transmitting stations were built, at distances of fifty miles. Many of the old pigeon stations were in existence up to the close of the last century.

Pigeons, as is well known from old time history, were also extensively used in ancient warfare. The old Roman general, "Decius Brutus," sent letters tied to the pigeons' feet, thus making futile the efforts of the Greek Emperor, "Anthony," to blockade the river Tiber. Further, it is well known, from old time history, that "Julius Cæsar," an old Roman general and ruler, always received early information of any uprising of the Gauls, (name of ancient France), and it is said that he employed pigeons for that purpose. In fact, pigeons have been used by all nations, and for many purposes. Turks and Persians, make a common practice of breeding this sort of pigeon in their "seraglios" (Turkish palace). Every "Bashaw" (governor of a province), has a basket of the pigeons sent him from the "grand seraglio" (imperial Turkish palace), and in case of any insurrection, or, other emergent occasion, he attaches a letter to the pigeon's feet and turns it loose, en route for the Turkish capital, Constantinople. But, for fear of being shot, or killed by hawks, five or six pigeons were generally used at the same time. There are also historical records showing that the "Celestial Empire" (China), has made extensive use of these birds as messengers.

In modern times, some shrewd men have utilized pigeons for business purposes. The millionaire banker, Rothschild, of London, England, laid the foundation of his immense wealth, ("Little Vanderbilt"), through the agency of pigeons. He established a pigeon post between the cities of Paris, France, and London, England, with several relay stations, by means of which he received early information of the rise and fall in the Exchange market, several days in advance of the regular mail stage. (At that time there was no "rapid," improved telegraph, or rail, or steamer communication). Many of the numerous readers and subscribers of the HOOSIER PHILATELIST in the United States, and in foreign countries, probably will remember what an important role carrier pigeons played in the history of the "Franco-German" war, and, in fact, they may be said to date from the "Siege of Paris" in 1870—71. When Paris was besieged by the victorious German troops, and all communication with the outer world cut off,—in these memorable days—pigeons were employed, and all available birds in Paris, not necessary for food, were placed at the disposal of the French government. These pigeons left Paris in balloons. Constant communication was thus kept up between Paris, and the city of Tours, the temporary seat of the fugitive French government. From the 15th of September to the 11th of December 1870, about two hundred nine pigeons were sent out, and although the majority of birds were lost, shot by the German soldiers, or struck by hawks, copies of all government dispatches reached Paris, in safety. Each time five pigeons were liberated, all carrying the same despatches. When the French fugitive government *must remove* to Bordeaux, France, difficulties increased on account of the greater distances, and the severity of the weather. (It was a very severe winter). From December 11th, 1870 to February 21st, 1871 when "Paris capitulated", eighty-three more birds were liberated at Bordeaux by the government, but few reached Paris. In all, three hundred sixty-three pigeons were sent out of Paris by balloon, and also two hundred three pigeons were liberated, out of which number only seventy-three pigeons reached Paris. And on February 21st, 1871, as the victorious German soldiers were marching on the streets of capitulated Paris and were playing the German national tune, "The Watch on the Rhine River" (Die Wacht am Rhein) in those memorable days, the inhabitants of the French capital, Paris, could eat "no pigeons", but must eat "dogs, cats and rats!" (Historical fact)!

As mentioned above, since 1870 the pigeon post was used as a military institution, by all nations of Europe. France, Germany, Belgium, Portugal, Italy, Russia, Austria, all those states have a pigeon post. In France all principal stations on the frontier are connected with the French capitol, Paris, by pigeon posts,

maintained by the French government, and, in addition, there are three hundred pigeon societies, regularly enrolled by the French government, to aid, in case of necessity. The government of Germany owns six thousand pigeons, flying between all important frontier forts and the German capitol, Berlin. Besides these, it has control of over one hundred thousand pigeons, owned by three hundred fifty private societies, that have placed their pigeons at the disposal of the German government and those societies form the "Pigeon Postal Union of Germany." In Spain, the birds are used on naval vessels and revenue cutters, communicating with the nearest Spanish military posts, in addition to being used on land. The Dutch Indies government is about to organize a post pigeon service in the country "Acheen," (Isle of Sumatra, Dutch Indies, Oceanica), and the Minister for the Colonies has ordered fifty pigeons in the mother country, Holland, for this purpose.

The above "Resume" of the history of "homing pigeons" will show, to what a great extent the bird is at present used as a messenger. If we take in consideration the trifling outlays that are connected with the establishment of a carrier pigeon service, and the material benefit, which might be derived from inaugurating a service of such aerial mail-carriers, I believe it would be worth while for "Uncle Sam," for instance, to give the scheme a trial! The average speed for a "homing pigeon" is about forty-five miles per hour, but the birds are known to make better time than the electric telegraph, especially for short distances, owing to the unavoidable loss of time, while the messages are being carried to and from telegraph offices by messenger boys. The endurance displayed by a "well trained homing pigeon," is remarkable. It can easily travel a distance of from four hundred to five hundred miles during one day. Yes, it has made as much as six hundred fifty miles a day. To judge from the frequent reports which I find published in foreign political papers, and from which I learn that the aerial mail-carriers have even been introduced into the "French-Congo", (Africa), there is no reason to doubt why the establishment of a carrier pigeon postal service between New York and the ports on the Pacific Coast, should not prove a thoroughly successful enterprise. I think the suggestion is completely feasible! The United States, though a peaceable country, might need, perhaps, at some future day, the pigeon postal service for "Government Despatches". Aerial mail service is not used by the people, but readers of THE HOOSIER PHILATELIST may try the scheme, if they are in possession of such qualified homing pigeons.



## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Mr. R. S. Hatcher informs us that he will on August 9th sail from New York for Europe.

Mr. C. W. Stutesman, of Bunker Hill, Ind., has favored us with a copy of his hand-book of stamps, coins, and relics. The book is neatly gotten up and is of value to the general collector. The price is only ten cents.

It is reported that Mr. Chas. Gregory, of the Brooklyn Philatelic Club, has been elected Treasurer of the American Philatelic Association. Mr. Gregory is a thorough gentleman and one of the oldest philatelists in the country. As to our opinion, the election will meet with the highest approval everywhere.

Owing to the change and slowness of former printers, the publishing of the HOOSIER PHILATELIST has been somewhat delayed for several months past. Our new printer assures us that he can get our paper out promptly and the editors will do all that is in their power to make H. P. one of the best. The August number will yet appear this month, and with the September number we will probably enlarge to twenty pages.

The second convention of the Canadian Philatelic Association will take place in Halifax July 31, 1889. The annual election of officers will also take place there. The successful ticket will probably be:

- A. J. Craig, Pictou, N. S., President.
- E. Y. Parker, Toronto, Vice President.
- F. J. Grenny, Brantford Exchange, Supt.
- D. A. King, Halifax, Secretary.
- F. Burnett, Brantford, Treasurer.
- J. R. Hooper, Librarian.

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CHICAGO NOTES.

At the C. P. S. meeting of July 3rd, the members had a rare treat. Mr. C. B. Corwin, who is a passive member of the society, very kindly forwarded that part of his collection which he had mounted for the inspection of the Society. Pres. Holman acted as exhibitor and lecturer, Mr. Corwin having sent explanatory notes with the collection, and a couple of hours was very pleasantly spent in viewing the treasures. The lot included the Ceylon and Confederate portions of the collection. I fear that some of the members present must certainly have violated the tenth commandment. The Chicago Society are very grateful for the treat afforded them.

The Society's rooms have been visited by a number of traveling philatelists since my last writing. Mr. W. R. King, of Grand Island, Neb., and his friend, Mr. L. T. Douglas; spent several days in the city, and met most of our members at the rooms during their stay. Other visitors were Mr. B. A. Cottlow, Shelbyville, Ill., and Mr. W. P. Crosby, Detroit, Mich.

Mr. Chapman, while on his summer vacation, made it a point to ransack his eastern home in the search for old stamps. He was successful in bringing to light a 3c. 1861, *unperforated*. As the stamp was on the original envelope and had never left the possession of the lady to whom it was addressed, there can be no doubt of its authenticity.

In my last communication to your journal, I did an injustice to the "prince of kickers", Mr. C. B. Corwin. Now, while Mr. Corwin will submit quietly to the epithet of "kicker", yet he asserts his kicking propensity when one tries to make him out a dealer. In the proper sense of the word, Mr. Corwin is most assuredly not a dealer, and my endeavor to make him appear in that light, was certainly unjust. I would like to see Mr. Corwin make as earnest an effort to correct some misstatements of his relating to Mr. Sterling as I am earnest in my endeavor to correct the misstatement I made concerning Mr. C. I think Mr. C. is fully justified in much of his kicking, but the only point he can hold against our able exchange superintendent is the fact that he exhibited stamps for sale during the session at Boston. Mr. Sterling is the right man in the right place, as all who patronize the Exchange Department will testify.

*Philo.*

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#### REVENUE STAMPS IN 1874.

I came across the following article in an old stamp paper published in 1874, and it seems as if the same objections against were always urged. I was interested and give it in full to the readers of the HOOSIER, thinking perhaps it might also interest them.

##### A PLEA FOR REVENUE STAMPS!

Under the above title, an article appeared, some years ago, in a leading Philatelic paper, advocating and pleading for the collecting of revenue stamps. I like the title so much, that I want to adopt it as mine, for precisely what I wish to do, is to plead for revenue stamps. Why is it? What right have postage stamps to have the monopoly? Do you speak of beauty, of delicacy of engraving, of richness of color? Be careful, there are revenue stamps that cast far in the shade the most beautiful of postage stamps.

Do you speak of ugliness, of rough, uncouth wood-cuts? we can show them to you.

Do you mention age? Revenue stamps were in use hundreds of years before postage stamps were ever dreamed of. As there are cheap, common, yet interesting stamps to fill up the postage stamp albums, so there are fine revenue stamps, easy to obtain and fair to look upon. Do you want expensive, rare stamps? We have some so scarce, that not half a dozen collectors have ever beheld them. I have heard the remark made, that there are so many revenue stamps, that a complete collection can not be formed. I ask, in return, are you able to gather a complete collection of postage stamps? Completeness, though an essential aim in stamp collecting, should not be the sole aim. Compare the three or four thousand of revenue stamps, with the millions of coins tried to be collected, and do not despair. Then what a chance for research revenue stamps afford. The fields of postage stamps have been so ploughed and harrowed, so dug up and scraped over, that it is difficult to obtain entirely new information about them, but in revenue stamps what a glorious opportunity is offered for study. For those who have not the time or inclination to study deeply in revenue's, there are sets that can be obtained with no trouble but that of paying for them, while for those who love a little difficulty in any pursuit, there are many countries of whose stamps we are either entirely ignorant, or at best, have but incomplete knowledge. In short, and to conclude, any objections that may be raised against revenue stamps, rebound with far greater force against postage stamps, and all arguments for postage stamps, apply with much more justice to revenue stamps. Moral and parting advice, *Collect Revenue Stamps*.

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55	"	" " buff, " "	.15
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60	"	" " buff,	.04
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